

PRIVILEGE 495



In our test conditions, the Privilege showed a quite remarkable potential.



With its very pleasant, classical lines the Privilege 495 is a success...

THE SABLES D'OLONNE-BASED BUILDER CONTINUES UPDATING ITS RANGE; AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL EVOLUTION OF THE 37' MODEL INTO THE 395, WHICH JUDICIOUSLY RETAINED THE PERSONALITY OF THE FORMER, IT IS NOW ATTACKING THE 50' SECTOR AND HAS TURNED THE 465 INTO THE 495. WE MADE THE MOST OF A FINE, WINDY NOVEMBER DAY TO TRY THE RESTYLED VERSION OF THIS 15-METRE PRIVILEGE ON THE WATER.

GENERAL PRESENTATION

For obscure reasons and in common with many other cruising catamarans, the 465 was created in a 'truncated' form. Was this dictated by the useful area? Or was it a perverse effect of the 'official' length? Or again, in submission to rising port charges? Fortunately, Alliaura has freed itself from these constraints and is now offering the 495, which has the extra length that was lacking in the 465; bravo, three cheers! This 50-footer is classically beautiful with harmonious proportions; the short cabin roof extension shows off the hulls, the wedge shaped lines improve the aerodynamics and the silhouette and rostrum blend well into the overall lines! Apart from their practical uses, the 5 rectangular portholes in the hull contribute to the excellent aesthetics of the 495. The restyling does not stop there: the rig has been upgraded and the builder has completely rethought the arrangement of the nacelle.

CONSTRUCTION AND ARCHITECTURE

The 495 is built in a mould by contact lamination of a PVC (80kg/m³) / glass / isophthalic polyester resin sandwich. The multidirectional tissues and the foam are applied manually and a taffeta mat is applied to the interior skin of the nacelle. Specifications are generous, the care taken during the different stages of construction contributes to the overall quality. As on all the modern Privileges, the structural bulkhead network bonded to the chassis is very reassuring! The nacelle is short and flowing, weight is well-distributed and the 495's platform rests on long, well-balanced hulls. Observation with the boat out of the water allows closer analysis: the 495's hulls have fine entries, a progressive increase in volume and tight lines; they are a long way from the 'clumsy' image which the Privilege range has sometimes attracted. The hull sections open out over the after half to compensate for a catamaran's natural tendency to bury its

transoms (as well anticipating the load carried by a large, comfortable catamaran). The boat rests on ailerons whose wetted surface area has been reduced as much as possible; the well-designed, elliptical rudder blades are balanced and their lower part is chamfered.

COCKPIT AND DECK LAYOUT

The new hull styling allows exemplary access to the hulls via the sugar-scoop sterns; the comfort, angle and gradient of the steps and the safety aspect of this 'rear access' are regularly praised by owners who have had to load food and awkward jerrycans aboard their 'cat' from the dinghy. Congratulations then on this area, especially as it forms part of a 'whole', comprising the cockpit, the exterior saloon, the steering position and the main-sail controls! One slightly negative point is that the rigid bimini frame (optional extra) obstructs the view. The forward part of the boat is classical, with the rostrum being the only feature that gives the

495 its particular personality. Anchoring arrangements benefit from this layout; all equipment is housed in the forward end of the 'fuselage', beyond the lower forestay support bulkhead. This is an important area aboard a cruising boat and all the necessary attention has been paid to the architecture and equipment (the chromed windlass, double stainless steel bow roller, cleats, diameter and length of the chain, are all up to the job).

DECK FITTINGS, MANOEUVRING STATIONS, RIG

The new (0.75m taller) Maréchal mast's section is reassuring; it has just one set of spreaders, but two pairs of diamonds. The company's usual manufacturing quality means that this 19.75m tube and its 7m boom leave an impression of serenity and power. The forward crossbeam with its rigging and the bowsprit for the gennaker are both of the same quality.

With lifelines and pulpits all around its perimeter, the Privilege 495 is very safe. In the 'Easy Cruise' version, the genoa sheets and the main halyard are electrically assisted; the 'A la Carte' version has an opening block on a pad-eye which allows the halyard to be directed to the windlass. In both versions, the arrangements for rolling the genoa and trimming the sheets are simple and effective, and use top-quality Harken-Spinlock equipment.

INTERIOR ACCOMMODATION

All the enthusiasts who had the chance to visit the owners' version of the Privilege 495 at the Paris Boat Show will, I think, agree with me when I give a special mention to the boatyard's interior decorators and cabinet makers. The good taste and quality of the work on this 2005 vintage boat appealed

A special mention for the very successful interior and the exemplary finish...



to me. Aboard our test version (4 cabins) the same care had been taken; it appears that Alliaura are putting in a lot of effort to offer this 'production luxury' image on its Privileges.

The comforts of the galley are situated in the centre of the port hull - oven, rings, numerous work surfaces, large stainless sinks and cold cupboards (positive and negative). The area is bright, well-ventilated (large opening hatch above the cooker) and is nicely separated from the saloon; I appreciated the way this important equipment is arranged. The chart table is to port on entering the nacelle, overlooked by two technical consoles, one of which houses the navigation instruments (automatic pilot, GPS-radar screen, etc...); the other is set into the cabin roof and houses the electrical switch panels and the resources indicators (water, fuel, generator, watermaker, etc...). The deck saloon is

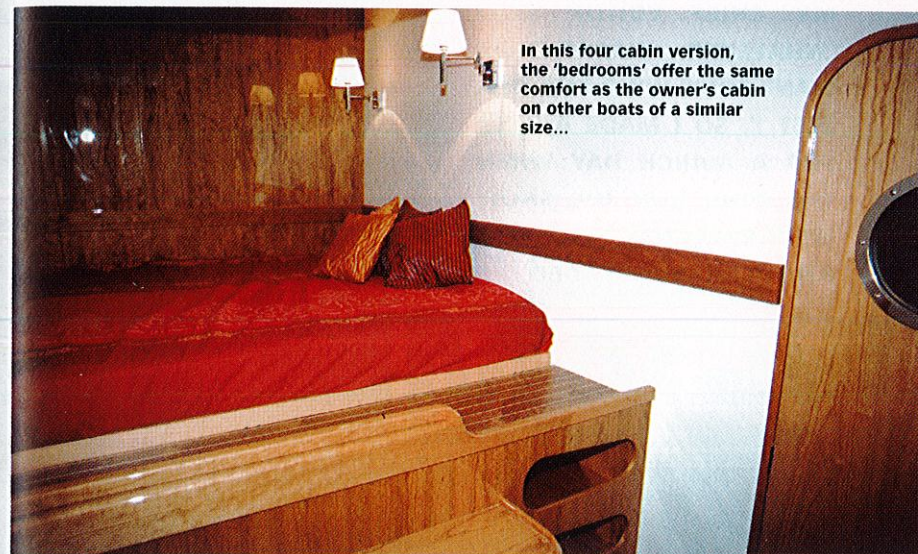
divided into two distinct, complementary areas: to starboard a generous settee and a designer table form a dining room for a dozen guests, whilst to port, a sofa overhangs the gangway-galley and rests against a bar unit, which also houses the CD and DVD players. The 4 double cabins are spacious and very comfortable. The central part of the starboard hull is given over to a large office space which will be home to the computer and the children's' school work. It is obvious that great care and much research have gone into the lighting, ventilation and choice of decorative materials, furnishings and headlinings.

ENGINES

The pair of 54 hp, 4-cylinder, normally-aspirated Yanmars are installed in a forward position under the aft berths; certain malcontents will talk about the possible noise problem, but personally I appreciate this installation as it gives better weight distribution (which determines the longitudinal stability). The fact that modern motors are well-balanced and discreet is another argument in favour of this choice!

SEA TEST

The Vendée Globe competitors were speeding southwards at the beginning of November and a fresh breeze was blowing the flags horizontally in Les Sables marina. We accompanied the 495 aboard the boatyard's Transcat, as it motored up the channel. With full main and genoa, the Privilege attacked a short swell and 20-25 knots of northerly breeze; the two crew members had no trouble at all getting the boat moving. Just to leeward and aft of the flying bridge, I set the Nikon to



In this four cabin version, the 'bedrooms' offer the same comfort as the owner's cabin on other boats of a similar size...

'repeat'; I had to be careful just to stay aboard the Transcat, as it was a rough ride up there at 12 knots! The photo session was very fruitful and gave an excellent perspective of the 50 footer in action: I was amazed by the ease with which the boat got into its stride. After climbing aboard in more sheltered waters, we sheeted in the sails for a real test. The Lombard-designed boat charged into the waves with determination; the weight was on the leeward hull but not excessively so and the boat was slipping along nicely. The windward hull reduced its wetted surface and the bows showed real agility in this lively sea.

We sailed to windward for an hour and a half, alternating close hauled (50° from the wind) and close reaching phases; the speed oscillated between 8 and 9 knots and progress was impressive (very little leeway, no impacts under the nacelle). The sea was now quite rough with a nasty short swell; the 495 ***** strode along untiringly. The wind was now blowing a steady 25 knots and strengthening, but the hulls remained light and didn't 'wallow'; the boat remained manoeuvrable and it would have been possible to sail even closer to the wind. Its movements were supple and there were none of the feelings of insecurity which afflict certain boats in these conditions. I went about and accelerated out of

the tack; by bearing away and luffing up to keep some apparent wind in the troughs I managed to keep the Privilege at between 10.5 and 13.5 knots. As it started to take off at speed, control of the trajectory remained amazing - sensitive and precise, but also powerful. The helm remained light and effective; the system of lines and rigid connecting rods works a treat on this boat. Contrary to our expectations, we regretted not having a gennaker; at 150° to the wind, the 495 would easily have stood up to the extra sail area, which would have allowed us to stay on the waves at more than 15 knots.

CONCLUSION

The Lombard-designed chassis worked perfectly in the medium conditions; the lightly-loaded 495 was agile to windward (as long as it was not sailed too close) and slipped along well off the wind. Its supple, well-damped behaviour contributes to the interior comfort level. The acoustic and thermal insulation is excellent and the structure remains completely unobtrusive. It is forgiving and pleasant at the helm, in short, a successful ocean-cruising catamaran which is easy to live with, solid and long-lasting as well as having surprising performance off the wind in a good breeze. Its good geometric qualities mean that it can be sailed under autopilot in rough seas.

PRIVILEGE 495

Pros

- Overall lines
- Comfort and build quality
- Cruising performance

Cons

- Fixed three-bladed props
- Plywood floors (why not sandwich?)
- The front of the (optional) rigid bimini frame gets in the way.



The heads are classical and beyond reproach.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Architect: Marc Lombard
Interior designer: Cabinet Dièdre and Alliaura research department
Builder: Alliaura Marine
Length: 14.95 m
Beam: 7.33 m
Unladen displacement: 11.3 t
Engines: 2 X 54 HP Diesel
Transmission: Sail drive
Navigation categories: A9-B9-C14-D16
Mast height: 19.75 m
Mainsail: 80 m²
Genoa: 52.5 m²
Gennaker: 86 m²
Diesel: 600 l
Water: 580 l

Price: Easy Cruise - 699,000 euros including tax, 'A la Carte' - 592,000 euros including tax
Full commissioning: 5,200 euros tax not included

Wood species used in accommodation: Cherry, beech, maple with floor in wenge (like ebony)



The famous Privilege 'rostrum', which gives an incredible interior living space and gives the whole range a characteristic family likeness.

Model	Architect	Builder	Length	Beam	Sail area	Weight	Price in euros including tax
Switch 51	M.V P-VL P	Sud Composites	15.40m	7.66m	128m ²	10t	670,000
Lagoon 500	M.V P-VL P	Lagoon	15.24m	8.53m	160m ²	18.6t	586,040
Niominka 52	P. Rivière	Tropical Composites	15.90m	7.80m	150m ²	9t	600,000
Catana 47	C. Barreau	Catana	14.30m	7.70m	151m ²	12.5t	866,400